

# MURDER AND NONNEGLIGENT MANSLAUGHTER

## DEFINITION

Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, as defined in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, is the willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another.

The classification of this offense, as for all other Crime Index offenses, is based solely on police investigation as opposed to the determination of a court, medical examiner, coroner, jury, or other judicial body. Not included in the count for this offense classification are deaths caused by negligence, suicide, or accident; justifiable homicides; and attempts to murder or assaults to murder, which are scored as aggravated assaults.

TREND		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offenses</i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</i>
1998	16,974	6.3
1999	15,533	5.7
Percent change	-8.5	-9.3

In 1999, the estimated number of persons murdered in the United States was 15,533, representing an 8-percent decrease from the 1998 estimate. The 1999 figure also represents a 28-percent decline in comparison to the 1995 estimate and a 34-percent decrease in contrast to the 1990 nationwide estimate. (See Table 1.)

When compared to 1998 figures, 1999 murder volumes in the Nation's cities collectively fell 7 percent. This decline ranged from 13 percent in cities with populations of less than 25,000 to 3 percent in those cities with populations of 250,000 and over. Declines of 12 percent in suburban counties and 10 percent in rural counties were also recorded.

Considering the four regions of the Nation, 43 percent of murders were recorded in the South, the most heavily populated area of the country. The West and Midwest each accounted for 22 percent, and the Northeast accounted for 14 percent. All regions showed declines in the number of murders from 1998 to 1999. The greatest drop, 11 percent, was recorded in the South; the West followed, experiencing a decline of 8 percent. Decreases of 7 and 5 percent were recorded in the Midwest and in the Northeast, respectively. (See Tables 3 and 4.)

Monthly distribution data indicate that murder was committed most frequently in August and least frequently in February.

Table 2.3

**Murder by Month**

Percent distribution, 1995-1999

Month	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January	8.3	8.7	8.7	9.1	8.7
February	6.8	7.8	7.3	7.2	7.0
March	7.6	7.5	8.5	8.3	7.7
April	8.4	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.8
May	7.9	8.3	7.9	8.4	8.3
June	8.2	8.8	8.7	8.4	8.0
July	8.9	8.8	9.0	8.7	9.0
August	9.9	9.1	8.7	9.2	9.1
September	8.6	8.1	8.2	8.3	8.8
October	8.8	8.5	8.6	8.3	8.4
November	8.0	8.0	8.2	7.6	8.3
December	8.6	8.9	8.6	8.8	8.8

**Rate**

The lowest national murder rate since 1966—5.7 murders per 100,000 inhabitants—was recorded in 1999, representing a 9-percent drop from the 1998 figure. Five- and 10-year trends indicate that the 1999 rate was 30 percent lower than in 1995 and 39 percent lower than in 1990.

Regionally, the South averaged 7 murders per 100,000 inhabitants; the West, 6 per 100,000; the Midwest, 5 per 100,000; and the Northeast, 4 per 100,000. All four of

the geographic regions experienced decreases in murder rates when compared with 1998 figures. The South recorded a decline of 12 percent; the West, 9 percent; the Midwest, 7 percent; and the Northeast, 5 percent. (See Table 4.)

By community type, the Nation's metropolitan areas reported a 1999 murder rate of 6 victims per 100,000 inhabitants. Both rural counties and cities outside metropolitan areas recorded murder rates of 4 per 100,000 inhabitants.

**Nature**

Supplemental data were provided by contributing agencies for 12,658 of the estimated 15,533 murders in 1999. These supplemental data, submitted monthly, provide the age, sex, and race of both victims and offenders; the types of weapons used; the relationships of the victims to the offenders; and the circumstances surrounding the murders.

Table 2.4

**Murder Victims**

by Race and Sex, 1999

Race of victim	Total	Sex of victim		
		Male	Female	Unknown
Total White Victims	6,310	4,489	1,818	3
Total Black Victims	5,855	4,734	1,121	—
Total Other Race Victims	369	251	118	—
Total Unknown Race	124	84	28	12
Total Victims <sup>1</sup>	12,658	9,558	3,085	15

<sup>1</sup> Total number of murder victims for whom supplemental homicide data were received.

Based on 1999 supplemental data, 76 percent of murder victims were male. Persons aged 18 or older comprised the greatest percentage of victims, 88 percent. Half of the victims for whom race was known were white, 47 percent were black, and the remaining 3 percent were persons of others races.

Supplemental data were provided for a total of 14,112 murder offenders in 1999. Males comprised 90 percent of those offenders for whom gender was reported, and persons aged 18 or older constituted 90 percent of those for whom age was reported. Of those offenders for whom race was known, 50 percent were black, 47 percent were white, and the remainder were persons of other races.

Data suggest that the relationship among murder victims and offenders most often is intraracial. Figures based on one victim/one offender incidents in 1999 indicate that 94 percent of black murder victims were slain by black offenders and 85 percent of white murder victims were slain by white offenders.

## Figure 2.6

**Murder**  
Percent Change  
from 1995

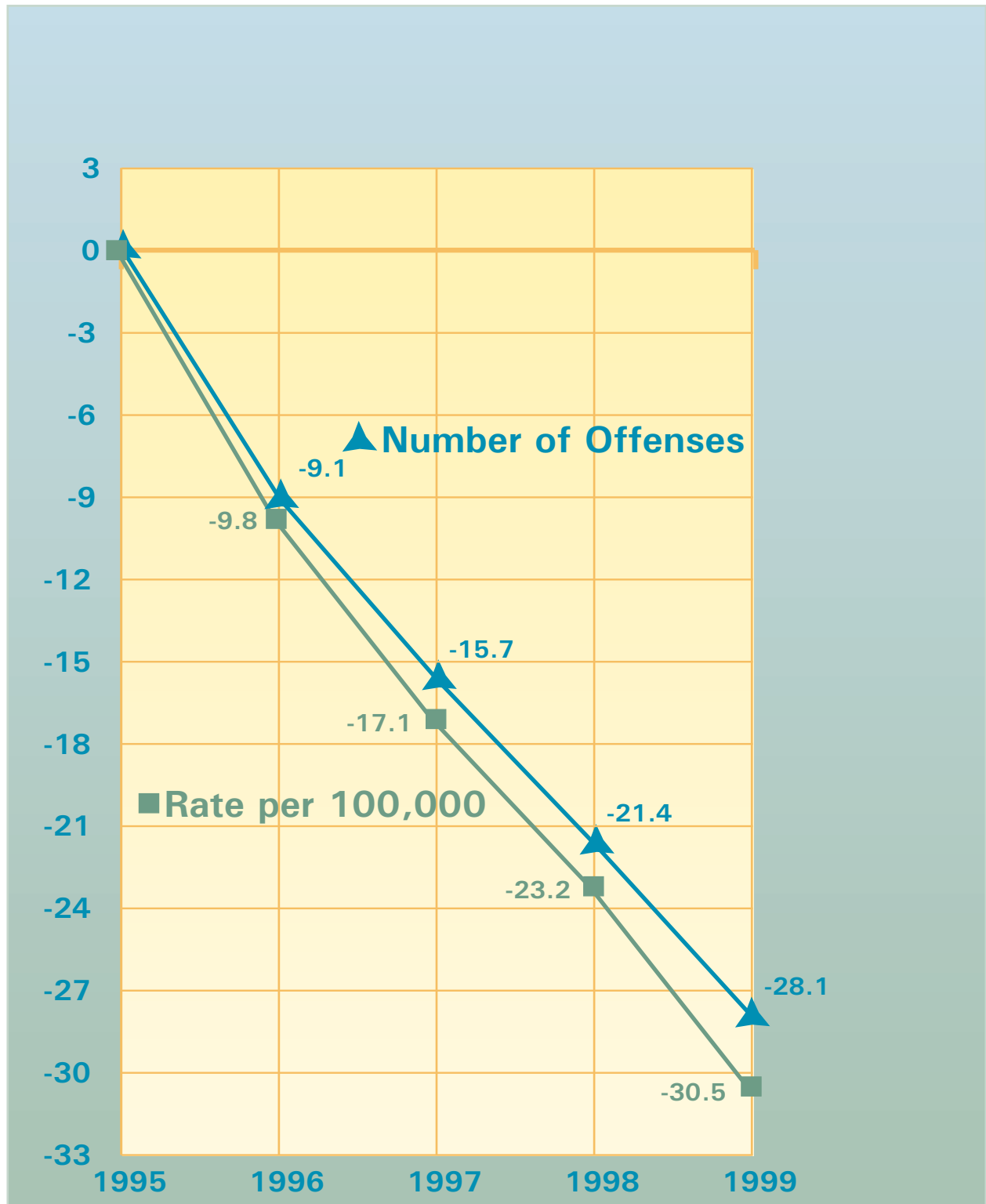


Table 2.5

**Murder Victims**

by Age, Sex, and Race, 1999

Age	Total	Sex			Race			
		Male	Female	Unknown	White	Black	Other	Unknown
Total	12,658	9,558	3,085	15	6,310	5,855	369	124
Percent distribution <sup>1</sup>	100.0	75.5	24.4	.1	49.8	46.3	2.9	1.0
Under 18 <sup>2</sup>	1,449	953	496	—	736	629	67	17
Under 22 <sup>2</sup>	3,322	2,551	771	—	1,520	1,663	111	28
18 and over <sup>2</sup>	10,997	8,464	2,528	5	5,465	5,152	300	80
Infant (under 1)	205	102	103	—	111	81	7	6
1 to 4	280	142	138	—	154	108	13	5
5 to 8	95	43	52	—	52	34	9	—
9 to 12	79	40	39	—	55	19	4	1
13 to 16	447	337	110	—	219	205	19	4
17 to 19	1,286	1,103	183	—	536	706	39	5
20 to 24	2,258	1,896	362	—	930	1,269	46	13
25 to 29	1,793	1,476	316	1	741	990	46	16
30 to 34	1,385	1,044	339	2	662	680	33	10
35 to 39	1,289	915	374	—	694	551	34	10
40 to 44	1,064	754	310	—	570	454	32	8
45 to 49	706	523	182	1	402	270	28	6
50 to 54	456	327	128	1	291	136	23	6
55 to 59	291	216	75	—	196	83	11	1
60 to 64	208	149	59	—	144	56	6	2
65 to 69	181	123	58	—	133	42	6	—
70 to 74	142	75	67	—	108	28	5	1
75 and over	281	152	129	—	203	69	6	3
Unknown	212	141	61	10	109	74	2	27

<sup>1</sup> Because of rounding, the percentages may not add to total.<sup>2</sup> Does not include unknown ages.

Table 2.6

**Murder Offenders**

by Age, Sex, and Race, 1999

Age	Total	Sex			Race			
		Male	Female	Unknown	White	Black	Other	Unknown
Total	14,112	9,140	1,046	3,926	4,684	5,038	307	4,083
Percent distribution <sup>1</sup>	100.0	64.8	7.4	27.8	33.2	35.7	2.2	28.9
Under 18 <sup>2</sup>	941	843	98	—	411	479	43	8
Under 22 <sup>2</sup>	3,384	3,119	264	1	1,404	1,849	106	25
18 and over <sup>2</sup>	8,332	7,406	918	8	4,034	3,992	249	57
Infant (under 1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 to 4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 to 8	4	4	—	—	1	—	3	—
9 to 12	19	14	5	—	7	11	—	1
13 to 16	496	434	62	—	218	247	27	4
17 to 19	1,711	1,590	120	1	672	976	53	10
20 to 24	2,356	2,170	186	—	987	1,285	67	17
25 to 29	1,326	1,193	129	4	619	660	35	12
30 to 34	969	811	158	—	493	429	40	7
35 to 39	773	648	124	1	444	303	21	5
40 to 44	594	502	92	—	344	228	20	2
45 to 49	386	321	64	1	236	134	12	4
50 to 54	233	200	33	—	153	73	6	1
55 to 59	152	132	19	1	89	60	2	1
60 to 64	80	70	10	—	55	24	1	—
65 to 69	65	56	9	—	47	17	—	1
70 to 74	36	34	2	—	23	10	3	—
75 and over	73	70	3	—	57	14	2	—
Unknown	4,839	891	30	3,918	239	567	15	4,018

<sup>1</sup> Because of rounding, the percentages may not add to total.<sup>2</sup> Does not include unknown ages.

Correlating the sex of victims to offenders, data indicate that males were most often murdered by males in 1999. In 89 percent of single-victim/single-offender incidents, both victim and offender were male. Additionally, 89 percent of female victims were murdered by males.

As in previous years, firearms were the weapon most frequently used in the commission of a murder. In 1999, approximately 7 out of every 10 murders in the Nation involved a firearm. Handguns accounted for 51 percent of the murder total for which weapon data were submitted. Shotguns and rifles accounted for another 4 and 3 percent, respectively. Other or unknown types of firearms accounted for 7 percent of the murders. Knives or cutting instruments were employed in 13 percent of murders; personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) in 7 percent; blunt objects (clubs, hammers, etc.) in 6 percent; and other dangerous weapons (poison, explosives, etc.) in the remainder. (See Table 2.10.) A state-by-state breakdown of weapons used in connection with murder is shown in Table 20.

Supplemental data for 1999 indicate that 48 percent of all murder victims knew their assailants: 14 percent were related to the offenders and 34 percent were acquainted with them. Twelve percent of the offenders were identified as strangers. The relationships between victims and offenders were not known for 40 percent of the

Table 2.7

**Victim/Offender Relationship**  
by Age, 1999  
[Single victim/Single Offender]

Age of victim	Total	Age of offender		
		Under 18	18 and over	Unknown
Total	6,434	460	5,532	442
Under 18	776	148	596	32
18 and over	5,579	310	4,870	399
Unknown	79	2	66	11

murders. (See Figure 2.7.) Husbands or boyfriends were identified as the murderers of 32 percent of female victims, and 3 percent of male victims were slain by wives or girlfriends.

Thirty percent of the murders during the year were a result of arguments, the most prevalent circumstance surrounding homicide situations. Seventeen percent of murders occurred in conjunction with felonious activities such as robbery, arson, etc., and 1 percent was suspected to have been the result of a felonious activity. Table 2.14 shows murder circumstances for the past 5 years, 1995-1999.

Table 2.8

**Victim/Offender Relationship**  
by Race and Sex, 1999  
[Single Victim/Single Offender]

Race of victim	Total	Race of offender				Sex of offender		
		White	Black	Other	Unknown	Male	Female	Unknown
White Victims	3,336	2,779	452	51	54	2,939	343	54
Black Victims	2,869	154	2,674	10	31	2,510	328	31
Other Race Victims	181	34	17	127	3	156	22	3
Unknown Race	48	17	12	1	18	26	4	18

Sex of victim	Total	Race of offender				Sex of offender		
		White	Black	Other	Unknown	Male	Female	Unknown
Male Victims	4,508	1,929	2,391	123	65	3,946	497	65
Female Victims	1,878	1,038	752	65	23	1,659	196	23
Unknown Sex	48	17	12	1	18	26	4	18

Table 2.9

**Murder, Types of Weapons Used**  
Percent distribution by region, 1999

Region	Total all weapons <sup>1</sup>	Firearms	Knives or cutting instru- ments	Unknown or other dangerous weapons	Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) <sup>2</sup>
Total	100.0	65.2	13.2	14.8	6.8
Northeastern States	100.0	60.6	16.5	14.0	8.9
Midwestern States	100.0	65.7	10.3	16.3	7.6
Southern States	100.0	67.6	13.0	14.0	5.5
Western States	100.0	64.5	13.8	15.3	6.5

<sup>1</sup> Because of rounding, the percentages may not add to total.

<sup>2</sup> Pushed is included in personal weapons.

Table 2.10

**Murder Victims**  
Types of Weapons Used, 1995-1999

Weapons	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	20,232	16,967	15,837	14,276	12,658
Total firearms	13,790	11,453	10,729	9,257	8,259
Handguns	11,282	9,266	8,441	7,430	6,498
Rifles	654	561	638	548	387
Shotguns	929	685	643	633	503
Other guns	29	20	35	16	90
Firearms, not stated	896	921	972	630	781
Knives or cutting instruments	2,557	2,324	2,055	1,899	1,667
Blunt objects (clubs, hammers, etc.)	918	792	724	755	736
Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) <sup>1</sup>	1,201	1,037	1,010	964	855
Poison	14	8	6	6	11
Explosives	192	15	8	10	—
Fire	166	170	140	132	125
Narcotics	22	33	37	35	23
Drowning	30	24	34	28	26
Strangulation	237	248	224	213	190
Asphyxiation	137	92	88	101	103
Other weapons or weapons not stated	968	771	782	876	663

<sup>1</sup> Pushed is included in personal weapons.

Table 2.11

**Murder Victims by Age**  
Types of Weapons Used, 1999

Age	Total	Weapons										
		Firearms	Knives or cutting instru- ments	Blunt objects (clubs, hammers, etc.)	Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) <sup>1</sup>	Poison	Explosives	Fire	Narcotics	Strangu- lation	Asphyxia- tion	Other weapon or weapon not stated <sup>2</sup>
Total	12,658	8,259	1,667	736	855	11	—	125	23	190	103	689
Percent distribution <sup>3</sup>	100.0	65.2	13.2	5.8	6.8	.1	—	1.0	.2	1.5	.8	5.4
Under 18 <sup>4</sup>	1,449	748	102	72	260	7	—	42	4	27	44	143
Under 22 <sup>4</sup>	3,322	2,289	265	120	300	7	—	50	4	44	48	195
18 and over <sup>4</sup>	10,997	7,434	1,546	643	568	4	—	83	18	162	57	482
Infant (under 1)	205	4	6	10	105	—	—	2	2	2	27	47
1 to 4	280	39	10	33	123	2	—	13	—	4	12	44
5 to 8	95	35	6	6	9	3	—	15	1	6	2	12
9 to 12	79	34	8	7	8	2	—	8	—	5	1	6
13 to 16	447	355	38	11	14	—	—	3	1	4	1	20
17 to 19	1,286	1,068	108	29	19	—	—	5	—	13	2	42
20 to 24	2,258	1,812	234	59	49	—	—	8	1	21	4	70
25 to 29	1,793	1,384	193	55	56	—	—	7	3	16	12	67
30 to 34	1,385	937	212	55	73	2	—	13	1	23	10	59
35 to 39	1,289	793	228	92	77	—	—	10	3	25	5	56
40 to 44	1,064	596	200	97	89	1	—	7	—	24	4	46
45 to 49	706	413	124	53	49	—	—	9	3	10	6	39
50 to 54	456	244	77	42	37	—	—	10	2	10	2	32
55 to 59	291	139	63	36	23	—	—	2	1	7	3	17
60 to 64	208	107	36	23	15	1	—	7	—	4	1	14
65 to 69	181	80	33	27	21	—	—	1	1	4	—	14
70 to 74	142	54	27	26	14	—	—	1	—	3	3	14
75 and over	281	88	45	54	47	—	—	4	3	8	6	26
Unknown	212	77	19	21	27	—	—	—	1	1	2	64

<sup>1</sup> Pushed is included in personal weapons.

<sup>2</sup> Includes drowning.

<sup>3</sup> Because of rounding, the percentages may not add to total.

<sup>4</sup> Does not include unknown ages.

Table 2.12

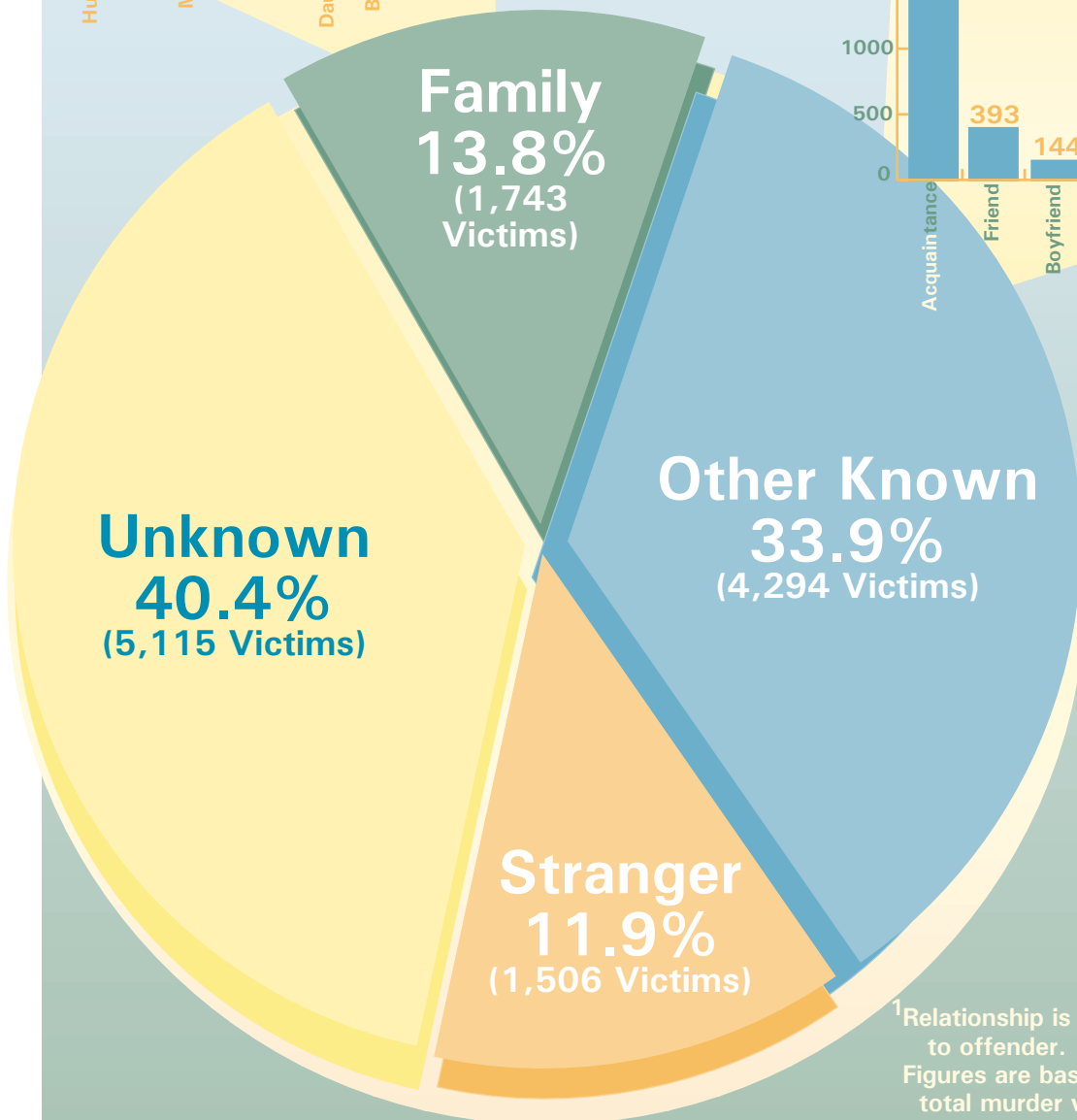
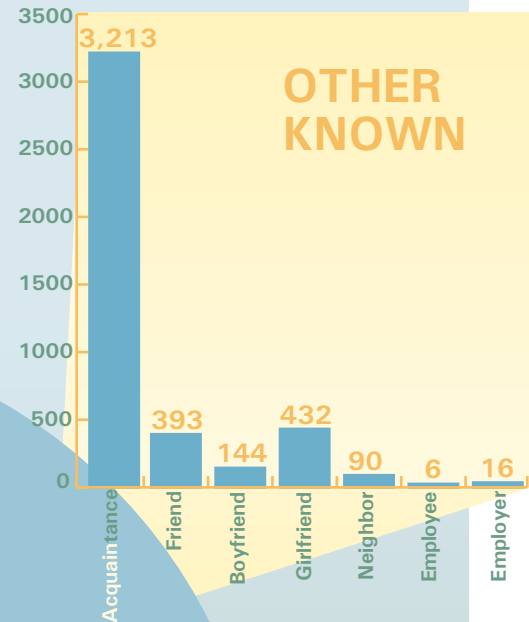
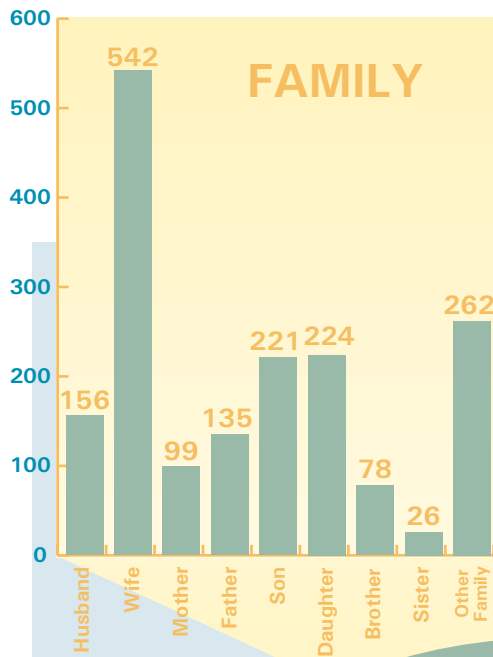
**Murder Circumstances**  
 by Relationship<sup>1</sup>, 1999

Circumstances	Total	Husband	Wife	Mother	Father	Son	Daughter	Brother	Sister	Other family	Acquaintance	Friend	Boyfriend	Girlfriend	Neighbor	Employee	Employer	Stranger	Unknown
Total <sup>2</sup>	12,658	156	542	99	135	221	224	78	26	262	3,213	393	144	432	90	6	16	1,506	5,115
Felony type total:	2,137	1	12	10	10	28	33	2	4	27	578	41	1	19	17	1	2	542	809
Rape	46	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	2	12	1	–	3	1	–	–	11	15
Robbery	1,010	–	1	2	2	–	–	1	–	8	195	11	–	–	7	–	2	355	426
Burglary	79	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	17	–	–	1	3	1	–	35	19
Larceny-theft	14	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	5
Motor vehicle theft	13	–	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	5
Arson	63	–	1	1	–	2	3	–	3	1	9	2	1	–	–	–	–	3	37
Prostitution and commercialized vice	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3
Other sex offenses	19	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	9	–	–	2	–	–	–	4	3
Narcotic drug laws	564	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	2	258	22	–	2	–	–	–	63	215
Gambling	17	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	10	2	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
Other - not specified	305	1	7	5	7	26	29	–	1	10	58	3	–	11	6	–	–	62	79
Suspected felony type	64	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	–	–	1	–	–	9	50
Other than felony type total:	6,678	138	480	69	107	178	160	71	20	192	2,276	299	132	358	67	4	13	770	1,344
Romantic triangle	133	1	6	–	1	2	–	–	–	2	73	10	2	10	1	–	–	14	11
Child killed by babysitter	32	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	4	24	1	–	–	1	1	–	–	–
Brawl due to influence of alcohol	187	5	2	1	2	–	–	4	1	7	84	12	1	2	6	–	–	36	24
Brawl due to influence of narcotics	111	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	1	2	64	3	1	3	–	–	–	3	32
Argument over money or property	211	4	3	1	2	–	–	2	–	9	124	14	1	7	2	–	3	11	28
Other arguments	3,391	102	308	38	74	37	23	48	15	111	1,189	178	113	276	39	1	7	363	469
Gangland killings	116	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	59	3	–	–	1	–	–	14	37
Juvenile gang killings	579	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	216	2	–	–	–	–	–	115	245
Institutional killings	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6	1	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
Sniper attack	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3
Other - not specified	1,903	26	161	27	27	139	136	17	3	55	437	75	14	60	17	2	3	211	493
Unknown	3,779	17	49	20	18	15	31	5	2	43	357	52	11	55	5	1	1	185	2,912

<sup>1</sup>Relationship is that of victim to offender.<sup>2</sup>Total murder victims for whom supplemental homicide data were received.

# Figure 2.7

Murder by Relationship<sup>1</sup>  
1999



<sup>1</sup>Relationship is that of victim to offender.  
Figures are based on 12,658 total murder victims for whom Supplementary Homicide Report data were received.

Table 2.13

**Murder Circumstances**  
 by Weapon, 1999

Circumstances	Total murder victims	Total firearms	Hand- guns	Rifles	Shot- guns	Other guns or type not stated	Knives or cutting instru- ments	Blunt objects (clubs, hammers, etc.)	Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.)	Poison	Pushed or thrown out window	Explo- sives	Fire	Narcotics	Drown- ing	Strangu- lation	Asphyxia- tion	Other
Total <sup>1</sup>	12,658	8,259	6,498	387	503	871	1,667	736	851	11	4	–	125	23	26	190	103	663
Felony type total:	2,137	1,453	1,216	59	60	118	197	142	135	2	–	–	63	4	4	37	22	78
Rape	46	2	2	–	–	–	9	7	11	–	–	–	1	–	–	12	1	3
Robbery	1,010	738	627	24	18	69	105	80	49	–	–	–	–	1	–	11	6	20
Burglary	79	35	23	7	2	3	17	9	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	7
Larceny-theft	14	6	4	–	–	2	5	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Motor vehicle theft	13	10	5	2	2	1	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Arson	63	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	56	–	–	–	2	3
Prostitution and commercialized vice	7	4	–	–	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	–
Other sex offenses	19	2	1	–	–	1	2	4	7	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	2
Narcotic drug laws	564	482	423	17	21	21	31	16	14	–	–	–	1	3	–	4	2	11
Gambling	17	16	12	–	–	4	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Other - not specified	305	157	119	8	17	13	26	24	41	2	–	–	4	–	4	6	9	32
Suspected felony type	64	55	48	1	1	5	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	2
Other than felony type total:	6,678	4,220	3,321	252	331	316	1,067	359	554	8	3	–	42	15	18	78	57	257
Romantic triangle	133	100	77	6	12	5	15	9	4	1	–	–	1	–	1	1	–	1
Child killed by babysitter	32	–	–	–	–	–	1	4	22	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	4
Brawl due to influence of alcohol	187	89	67	5	12	5	44	13	27	–	–	–	2	–	–	1	–	11
Brawl due to influence of narcotics	111	84	73	1	7	3	12	3	4	2	–	–	1	1	–	–	2	2
Argument over money or property	211	145	109	7	11	18	30	13	18	–	–	–	2	–	–	2	1	–
Other arguments	3,391	2,071	1,669	127	155	120	766	190	212	–	1	–	14	2	2	48	9	76
Gangland killings	116	102	87	2	2	11	7	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4
Juvenile gang killings	579	539	471	24	16	28	26	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	6
Institutional killings	11	1	1	–	–	–	1	1	6	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1	–
Sniper attack	4	4	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Other - not specified	1,903	1,085	763	80	116	126	165	116	260	5	2	–	22	11	15	26	43	153
Unknown	3,779	2,531	1,913	75	111	432	400	234	162	1	1	–	20	4	4	74	22	326

<sup>1</sup> Total murder victims for whom supplemental homicide data were received.

Table 2.14

**Murder Circumstances, 1995-1999**

Circumstances	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total <sup>1</sup>	20,232	16,967	15,837	14,276	12,658
Felony type total:	3,585	3,186	2,968	2,514	2,137
Rape	82	70	67	62	46
Robbery	1,872	1,618	1,509	1,244	1,010
Burglary	124	123	101	92	79
Larceny-theft	26	24	16	17	14
Motor vehicle theft	49	23	18	17	13
Arson	112	105	92	83	63
Prostitution and commercialized vice	9	8	7	15	7
Other sex offenses	30	27	23	20	19
Narcotic drug laws	1,031	843	802	682	564
Gambling	22	12	19	12	17
Other - not specified	228	333	314	270	305
Suspected felony type	113	74	153	104	64
Other than felony type total:	10,686	8,597	7,666	7,232	6,678
Romantic triangle	282	189	176	187	133
Child killed by babysitter	24	29	24	23	32
Brawl due to influence of alcohol	262	256	239	213	187
Brawl due to influence of narcotics	185	195	106	117	111
Argument over money or property	340	328	287	241	211
Other arguments	5,229	4,719	4,476	4,129	3,391
Gangland killings	88	84	86	73	116
Juvenile gang killings	1,158	858	783	628	579
Institutional killings	31	13	19	15	11
Sniper attack	14	8	8	16	4
Other - not specified	3,073	1,918	1,462	1,590	1,903
Unknown	5,848	5,110	5,050	4,426	3,779

<sup>1</sup> Total number of murder victims for whom supplemental homicide data were received.

Table 2.15

**Murder Circumstances by Victim Sex, 1999**

Circumstances	Total murder victims <sup>1</sup>	Male	Female	Unknown
Total <sup>1</sup>	12,658	9,558	3,085	15
Felony type total:	2,137	1,710	425	2
Rape	46	1	45	—
Robbery	1,010	872	138	—
Burglary	79	46	33	—
Larceny-theft	14	10	4	—
Motor vehicle theft	13	12	1	—
Arson	63	37	26	—
Prostitution and commercialized vice	7	6	1	—
Other sex offenses	19	8	11	—
Narcotic drug laws	564	519	45	—
Gambling	17	17	—	—
Other - not specified	305	182	121	2
Suspected felony type	64	52	12	—
Other than felony type total:	6,678	4,879	1,796	3
Romantic triangle	133	97	36	—
Child killed by babysitter	32	18	14	—
Brawl due to influence of alcohol	187	169	18	—
Brawl due to influence of narcotics	111	85	26	—
Argument over money or property	211	176	35	—
Other arguments	3,391	2,450	940	1
Gangland killings	116	111	5	—
Juvenile gang killings	579	548	31	—
Institutional killings	11	11	—	—
Sniper attack	4	3	1	—
Other - not specified	1,903	1,211	690	2
Unknown	3,779	2,917	852	10

<sup>1</sup> Total number of murder victims for whom supplemental homicide data were received.

## Law Enforcement Response

The 1999 clearance rate for murder, 69 percent for law enforcement agencies nationwide, is higher than for any other Crime Index offense. Collectively, law enforcement agencies in the Nation's cities cleared 67 percent of reported murders. The rural county clearance rate for murder was 75 percent, and the suburban county clearance rate was 74 percent. (See Table 25.)

Geographically, the Northeastern States experienced a clearance rate of 78 percent, the highest among the Nation's regions. The Southern States followed with a clearance rate of 71 percent. The Midwestern and Western States each registered a 63-percent clearance rate.

The number of juveniles involved in criminal activity, when measured by clearances, was proportionately lower for murder than for any other Index crime in 1999. Persons under 18 years of age accounted for 6 percent of the murders cleared nationally. In the Nation's cities collectively, 7 percent of murder clearances involved juveniles; in both rural and suburban counties, 5 percent of murder clearances involved juveniles.

Law enforcement agencies made an estimated 14,790 arrests for murder in 1999. Fifty-one percent of the arrestees in 1999 were under 25 years of age. (See Table 41.)

Eighty-nine percent of those arrested for murder were male. Blacks comprised 52 percent of the total; whites, 46 percent; and other races, the remainder.

Compared to the 1998 count, total arrests for murder decreased 12 percent. Arrests of persons aged 18 and over fell 9 percent, and arrests of those younger than 18 declined 31 percent. During the same period, murder arrests of males were down 12 percent and arrests of females decreased 10 percent. Arrests of both juvenile females and males also dropped in 1999—down 37 and 31 percent, respectively.

Long-term trends indicate the 1999 murder arrest total was 30 percent below the 1995 figure and 39 percent below the 1990 figure.

## Justifiable Homicide

Certain willful killings are classified as justifiable or excusable, based on the results of law enforcement investigation. In UCR, justifiable homicide is defined as and limited to the killing of a felon by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty, or the killing of a felon by a private citizen during the commission of a felony. These offenses are tabulated independently and are not included in murder counts.

Supplemental data for 482 justifiable homicides were submitted in 1999. Of that total, 294 involved law enforcement officers and 188 involved private citizens. Two hundred ninety-one of the 294 justifiable homicides involving law enforcement officers involved a firearm, and in 90 percent of these instances a handgun was employed. Firearms were used in 82 percent of the justifiable homicides involving private citizens; 87 percent of these firearm homicides were committed with handguns. Ten percent of justifiable homicides by private citizens involved knives or cutting instruments, and approximately 8 percent involved other weapons. (See Tables 2.16 and 2.17.)

Table 2.16

### Justifiable Homicide

by Weapon, Law Enforcement<sup>1</sup>, 1995-1999

Year	Total	Total fire-arms	Hand-guns	Rifles	Shot-guns	Fire-arms, type not stated	Knives or cutting instruments	Other dangerous weapons	Personal weapons
1995	389	386	351	12	19	4	—	3	—
1996	357	354	326	10	10	8	—	1	2
1997	366	363	315	14	20	14	—	1	2
1998	369	367	322	15	18	12	—	—	2
1999	294	291	261	11	14	5	—	1	2

<sup>1</sup> The killing of a felon by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty.

Table 2.17

### Justifiable Homicide

by Weapon, Private Citizen<sup>1</sup>, 1995-1999

Year	Total	Total fire-arms	Hand-guns	Rifles	Shot-guns	Fire-arms, type not stated	Knives or cutting instruments	Other dangerous weapons	Personal weapons
1995	268	230	179	18	25	8	24	10	4
1996	261	222	184	12	18	8	28	7	4
1997	280	238	197	16	14	11	28	6	8
1998	196	170	150	6	14	—	17	5	4
1999	188	154	134	5	9	6	18	9	7

<sup>1</sup> The killing of a felon, during the commission of a felony, by a private citizen.